

Sailor's *Quick Action* Prevents Potential Disaster

By JO2 Ryan Hicks,
USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72)

A potential disaster was averted aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), thanks to a carrier air wing senior chief petty officer's quick response when an aircraft flare-dispenser ignited near the flight-deck bomb farm.

Within 30 seconds of the handler's fire call, Senior Chief Aviation Ordnanceman (Aviation Warfare) Randy Horner grabbed the burning cylinder and ran 20 yards to the edge of the flight deck to throw it overboard.

"When I saw the smoke, I assessed the situation and figured the quickest way to deal with it was to throw it overboard," said Senior Chief Horner, who is his division's leading chief petty officer. "Ever since I was an airman, I've followed the advice, 'If it's smokin' and you can get rid of it, get rid of it.'"

The flare is used with F-14 Tomcats as a decoy for heat-seeking missiles, and it contains 80 internal units called BOIS-IRs, each of which burns at 1,600 degrees F.

"By the time I reached it, about 20 or 30 [of the internal units] were burning," said Horner. "When I grabbed the [dispenser] handle, it burned my hands a little, like grabbing a hot pan with the water boiling over."

Along with the senior chief, several other *Lincoln* crewmen raced to the scene with fire-fighting gear, ready to battle the potential conflagration. For his action, AOCS Horner—just two-and-a-half hours later—received the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal from the carrier air wing commander, Capt. Kevin Albright. 🇺🇸

Navy photo by Jason R. Zalasky

